

**For Immediate Release:
February 4, 2008**

**Contact: Elizabeth Alexander/Danielle Borrin
(202) 224-5042**

BIDEN: Bush Budget Could Roll Back More than a Decade of Success in Combating Domestic Violence

Washington, DC – United States Senator **Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE)** and author of the landmark 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) took the Administration to task today for drastic cuts in funding for crucial domestic violence programs. President Bush's FY 2009 budget released today proposes a \$100 million cut in Violence Against Women Act programs, from \$382 million to \$280 million. In addition, the Administration's budget makes a radical proposal to collapse over 20 separate VAWA programs into one "consolidated competitive grant program," which would force individual victim service organizations, police, prosecutors, judges, tribal governments and states to compete for funding from the federal government. The Administration's proposal would also strip away critical, guaranteed funding to states through the Act's cornerstone provision - the STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors) grant program.

"The Administration's budget for Violence Against Women Act programs is an outrage," **said Sen. Joe Biden.** "Domestic violence impacts one in every four women, yet the Administration proposes cutting spending by almost a third – deviating significantly from historic spending on family violence programs."

According to a new national survey in just one 24-hour cycle, at least 7,700 battered women and children were turned away because of a shortage of services. Services like emergency shelters, counseling, and legal representation simply did not have the resources and manpower to handle those families afflicted by domestic and sexual violence.

"It's time to spend more, not less on our nation's communities. If President Bush's budget proposal is followed, rest assured the number of abused victims and their children turned away from critical services will only increase," **added Sen. Biden.**

The Administration's budget also makes a radical proposal to collapse all Violence Against Women Act programs into "a new consolidated, competitive grant program."

"This funding reorganization proposal creates an unwieldy and profoundly unfair playing field, forcing both small and large entities to compete against each other for funding. Those on the front lines will now have to fight for resources to continue their work. Reorganization on this scale abrogates entirely the intent and language of the Violence Against Women Act," **said Sen. Biden.** "Since its passage, Congress has taken great care to ensure that VAWA grants are provided to a variety of vital domestic violence programs. If allowed to go forward, this

Administration's disastrous budgeting priorities could roll back more than a decade of success in investigating, prosecuting and preventing domestic and sexual violence."

###

Sen. Biden is the author of the landmark Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was signed into law in 1994. Since that time, VAWA has provided over \$4 billion dollars to combat domestic violence and sexual assault nationwide. The Violence Against Women Act's programs range from policies to encourage the prosecution of abusers, to victims' services to prevention programs. VAWA helped forge new alliances between police officers and victim advocates. Senator Biden's passion and commitment to ending domestic and sexual violence remains unwavering. He also authored the Violence Against Women Act of 2005, legislation that rejuvenated core programs, made targeted improvements, and responsibly expanded the Act to reach the needs of America's families. The measure passed the Senate unanimously and was signed into law on January 5, 2006.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline, an entity created in the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 has played a key role in helping victims. To help answer the influx calls, Senator Biden began an innovative private/public partnership to improve the computer and telephone technology at the National Domestic Violence Hotline based in Austin, Texas. Senator Biden enlisted the participation of America's major technology companies and asked them to transform the Hotline into a 21st century call-center.